

Report of the 2nd National Platform Meeting on Land and Water Management in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, December 19, 2011



RESEARCH PROGRAM ON
Water, Land and
Ecosystems

Nile Basin Development Challenge

The Nile Basin Development Challenge (NBDC) is funded by the CGIAR Challenge Program on Water and Food (CPWF). It aims to improve the resilience of rural livelihoods in the Ethiopian highlands through a landscape approach to rainwater management. It comprises five linked projects examining: 1) Learning from the past; 2) developing integrated rainwater management strategies; 3) targeting and scaling out of rainwater management innovations; 4) assessing and anticipating the consequences of innovation in rainwater management systems; and 5) catalyzing platforms for learning, communication and coordination across the projects.

The NBDC is implemented by a consortium comprising the International Livestock Research Institute, International Water Management Institute, World Agroforestry Centre, Overseas Development Institute, Nile Basin Initiative, Stockholm Environment Institute, Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute, Catholic Relief Services – Ethiopia, Oromia Regional Research Institute, Amhara Agricultural Research Institute, Bahir Dar University, Ambo University, Nekemte University, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Water and Energy. More information: <http://www.nilebdc.org>

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Editing, design and layout—ILRI Editorial and Publishing Services, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Citation: Swaans, K. 2012. Report of the 2nd National Platform Meeting on Land and Water Management in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, December 19 2011. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, ILRI.

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Executive summary

Early 2011, the Nile Basin Development Challenge (Nile BDC) [initiated a National Platform on Land and Water Management](#) along with key national players. There was a widespread agreement that a well negotiated national platform can be a relevant mechanism to minimize duplication of efforts and enhance communication between actors and across sectors for improved land and water management in Ethiopia.

On 19 December 2011, the [second national Platform meeting](#) on Land and Water Management was held at the Addis Ababa campus of the International Livestock Research Institute ([ILRI](#)). About 30 participants representing governmental organizations and ministries, non-governmental organizations and development associations, universities and research organizations came together to talk about the objectives, functions and structure of the national platform, and to identify priority areas and approaches to address them.

While National Platform meetings are expected to take place twice a year, the idea is to have thematic working groups develop an action plan around priority areas with several activities throughout the year that will feed back to the national platform meetings. These meetings are also meant to invite other organizations and networks to introduce various initiatives of relevance to each group. After an introductory [presentation on the platform itself](#), the [MERET program](#) and [RiPPLE](#) presented their experiences linking local practices with national planning.

Inspired by the presentations and suggestions made by the steering group of the national platform, five thematic working groups were formed to develop further action:

- Institutional innovation
- Technological innovation
- Land and water management
- Policy influence group
- Resilient ecosystems

The participants developed draft action plans for each of these groups and identified champions to lead small working groups around each theme from January 2012 onwards.

The working groups are expected to identify key issues and challenges, document ongoing experiences and disseminate information that is already available, identify research gaps etc. In addition to a common agenda across the groups, each group may have its own priorities and activities. The Nile BDC will initially support the platform through providing facilities and infrastructure, but over time additional sources will have to be mobilized, hence the importance of building upon existing initiatives.

Since the platform intends to become the nationwide forum for information exchange, learning and innovation on land and water management, by linking local experiences to national planning, it is of great importance that organizations and institutes working on land and water management in Ethiopia actively participate and contribute to the working groups and the national platform.

To play an active role in one of the working groups or to keep informed about the national platform, please contact Tsedey Ayalew (t.ayalew@cgiar.org) or Kees Swaans (k.swaans@cgiar.org).

1. General Introduction

The workshop was opened by Adane Kassa, executive director of Water Action and Chairperson of the steering committee of the National Platform on Land and Water Management of Ethiopia.

Adane Kassa referred to the 1st National Platform Meeting that took place at ILRI campus on the 8th of April 2011. During that meeting, there was a widespread agreement that a well negotiated national platform can be a mechanism to minimize duplication of efforts and enhance communication between actors and across sectors for improved land and water management in Ethiopia. Following that meeting, a steering committee (SC) of key players was established on the 26th of July to discuss the overall objectives, functions and structure of the platform (see annex 1). He reminded however that despite its support, the success of the national platform depends on action and the contribution of its members.

To take the initial ideas for the national platform further, it was decided to focus the program on the establishment of a framework for action. Besides the presentation of the overall structure for the national platform, and two presentations by the MERET program and RiPPLE, priority areas and approaches to address these featured the agenda (see annex 2).

Almost thirty organizations were represented. The group was highly diverse with governmental organizations, NGOs/CBOs, universities, and research organizations represented, covering both implementers and policy makers, working from the local to the national level; still it was striking that there was no representation from the private sector and only a few women were present (see annex 3). This may encourage the organizers, but also the members of the platform to pay more attention to these aspects in the follow up activities.

2. The National Platform: objectives, functions and structure

Kees Swaans of the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) provided a short presentation on the national platform, its function, and structure ([view the national platform presentation](#)).

During the 1st National Platform meeting, the following vision was formulated:

“Ensure a healthy, sustainable, and equitable use and management of natural resources for improved productivity, livelihoods and ecosystem services in Ethiopia”

The objectives were:

- Improve sectoral integration, communication and cross-institutional learning
- Create optimal conditions for (demand driven) capacity in research, development, academia and policy development
- To improve access to knowledge and resources
- Provide an enabling environment for sustainable and equitable value-added production systems and functional market links

To realize these objectives, various national platform functions were identified during the 1st national platform meeting and the meeting with the Steering Committee:

- Information sharing – a place for dialogue
- Bring experiences together from different sectors
- Serving as a knowledge base by documenting experiences, lessons, best practices
- Communicate experiences, lessons, best practices to other actors
- Link best practices to capacity building through training and education
- Improve co-ordination amongst organizations within and across sectors through harmonized approaches
- Ensure institutional linkages between local, regional, national level (and flows between them)
- Link ‘talking’ to action; bring experiences and lessons together into integrated models that can be tested, replicated, scaled out and up
- Create interface between practitioners and policy makers; highlight issues that are important to policy
- Serving as stepping stone for the formation of regional platforms and link to other platforms in synergistic way (e.g. SLM platform)

Key to carry out the functions is a structure that brings people from different type of organizations, across sectors and at various institutional levels together. The structure for the national platform is presented in figure 1.



Figure 1: *Structure of the National Platform on Land and Water Management*

The national platform consists of a steering committee, represented key players in the field of land and water management from both the governmental and non-governmental organizations, and supported by the Nile Basin Development Challenge. The national platform intends to link local experiences with national planning, and open opportunities to engage with policy makers. While the National Platform meetings are expected to take place twice a year, it is envisioned that the platform leads to the establishment of thematic working groups with several activities throughout the year.

3. Setting the scene: experiences from Ethiopia

To stimulate the discussion on priority areas for the working groups and what those working groups could do to address some of the challenges, the MERET program and RiPPLE were asked to each give a 15-20 minute presentation.

- MERET was asked for a presentation on the evolution from a WFP-supported food-for-work to an integrated management program, the different triggers of change and how MERET has managed to transfer the management of watersheds from government-led to community-led landscape governance? What were the experiences to connect local action with higher levels, what has been the impact, and what were the key challenges experienced?
- Ripple was asked for a presentation of their work and approaches used to link local action with higher levels, especially in relation to approaching policy, the methodologies and lessons learned, the types of adjustments made in approaches and the 'impact' of engagement on policy, if any.

3.1 Presentation by Betru Nedessa from the MERET program

The *Management of Environmental Resources to Enable Transition to better livelihoods* (MERET) program has a long history in Ethiopia and has evolved from the Food for Work (FFW) program in the 1980s to a Community-Based Participatory Watershed Management Approach (CBPWSM) in the 1990s, eventually morphing into MERET in 2003.

Key to MERET's success were effective technologies/structures, community empowerment for decision-making, appropriate technologies, demonstration of new technologies ("*seeing is believing*"), regular technical backstopping and close supervision, strict adoption of integrated watershed management approach and linkages, and synergy-focused partnerships among stakeholders.

The program also faces various challenges such as resource limitations for scaling up and out, lack of cash for promoting income-generating activities, absence of impact studies and documentation of best practices, limited exposure to innovative technologies from elsewhere, institutional instability and frequent staff turnover ([View the MERET presentation](#)).

3.2 Presentation by Zemedu Abebe from RiPPLE

RiPPLE presented its experiences and lessons working through multi-stakeholder processes in the field of water and sanitation, integrated water resource management and climate change. RiPPLE works through so called '*learning and practice alliances*' (LPAs), which are interconnected platforms of stakeholders working together to learn, innovate and scale up. LPAs are organized as linked platforms operating from woreda level all the way to national and international level. The main focus is on action research, information and documentation, capacity building and training, and linking policy and practice.

The factors influencing the sustainability and success of RiPPLE include: working closely with interested partners who directly benefit from the alliance, institutionalization of activities and approach in governmental organizations, working on key challenges by building on existing initiatives and using experienced process facilitators, ensuring linkages to implementation projects, organizing regular training courses for Training and Vocational Education Centers and other parties. The whole RiPPLE approach has been followed with an eye for ensuring institutional and individual commitment through shared ownership ([View the RiPPLE presentation](#)).



4. Priority areas and approaches

Inspired by the presentations and suggestions made by the steering group of the national platform, five priority areas were identified for further action:

- Institutional innovation¹
- Technological innovation
- Land and water management
- Policy influence group²
- Resilient ecosystems

The priority areas form the basis for thematic working groups; as there was no time to discuss approaches and this stage of the process, they were discussed in the next session.



¹ Original title was 'Community empowerment, institutions and sustainability'

² Original title was 'Linking research, policy and practice'

5. Thematic working groups

The participants developed draft action plans for each of the thematic working groups and identified champions to lead small working groups around each theme from January 2012 onwards; the champions for each group are:

- Institutional innovation - Zalalem Lema (Ripple), with support of Alan Duncan (ILRI)³
- Technological innovation - Birru Yitaferu (ARARI)
- Land and water management - Zemedede Abebe (Ripple), with support of Betru Nedassa (MERET-MoA)
- Policy influence group - Tesfay Alemseged (Ethiopian Institute of Water Resources)
- Resilient ecosystems - Daniel Denano (SLM-MoA)

The descriptions here form a first impression of the discussion that took place during the workshop.

³ Zalalem Lema has offered to lead initially the group on institutional innovation with support from Alan Duncan, but as Ripple already leads one other group, it is up to them to find adequate replacement.

5.1 Institutional innovation

Vision/goal	To encourage honest debate and action at national level on how to ensure widespread community engagement in land and water management
Topics	<p>Community participation</p> <p>Developing ideas for incentive (motivation) mechanisms (not just short-term financial incentives)</p> <p>Enhancing local institutional capacities (capacity building on community engagement, participatory methods, creating ownership, how to connect with and strengthen existing traditional institutions, championing indigenous knowledge)</p> <p>Working out financing mechanisms for community-led NRM initiatives, e.g. micro-credit, community fund (self financing)</p> <p>Developing ways to ensure community voice at national level (e.g. this platform)</p> <p>The role of women in decision making in NRM</p> <p>Gender – e.g.: women’s and youths’ voice in NRM initiatives</p> <p>Value chains – looking at income diversification opportunities, market-led NRM</p>
Outputs & outcomes	<p>Awareness created</p> <p>Entry points for income generation, food security, Identified</p> <p>Case studies on benefits of community empowerment; positive and negative developed and shared</p> <p>Guideline of approaches for ensuring community participation in projects</p> <p>Community based institutions enabling environment created</p> <p>Identified opportunities and funding streams for capacity building opportunities around community engagement</p> <p>Building bridges between government and non-government organization around community engagement</p> <p>Asset building enhanced at both community and household level</p> <p>Voice of the community recognized</p> <p>Community power of decision making enhanced and bargaining power also.</p>
Activities & approach	<p>Commission students to undertake case studies</p> <p>Workshops to develop best practices on community engagement</p> <p>Establish models for scaling out</p> <p>Fund raising/concept note development around capacity building opportunities</p> <p>Establish demonstration sites on how community participation leads to successful/sustainable water management structures</p> <p>Creating or identifying successful NRM women’s or community groups as models of success. Focus on women headed households</p> <p>Livelihood building blocks</p>
Linkages / Support	MERET project, SLM, PSNP, IMAWESA project, NGO’s (e.g. CARE, RIPPLE, Water Action), IRC (Holland)
Funding	World Bank, DFID (SCIP), USAID Feed the Future, AGP, GIZ
People	Zelalem Lemma (Ripple), Yiftusira Yitayew (MoA), Alan Duncan (ILRI)

5.2 Technological innovation

Vision/goal	Best practices and technologies in land and water management will be identified and developed into packages and ready for dissemination
Topics	Technological innovations on rainwater management Technological innovations in surface and ground water management and use Land rehabilitation and management Technological innovations in improving land productivity Economic and institutional aspects of NRM
Outputs & outcomes	Technological package documents Training module Improved water and land resource improved land productivity improved food security
Activities & approach	Identifying and compiling rainwater harvesting, management and utilization technologies at different environmental condition Identification and compilation of landscape productivity packages Identifying institutional building for land rehabilitation and water management Documenting indigenous knowledge and best practices Further developing 'happy strategy' game Training workshops engaging students Targeting and dissemination of technologies to appropriate users and environments Cost benefit analysis of promising technologies Carrying out impact assessment and M&E
Linkages/ Support	Using governmental organizations - like NARS, SLM, Universities ... NGOs- like GIZ, SNV, World Vision, ... International organizations - like NBI, IWMI, ...
Funding	Partner institutions in the platform
People	EIAR/RARIs, universities, EEA, SLM, Water action and RIPPLE

5.3 Land and water management

Vision/goal	Enhanced learning among national regional and woreda/community stakeholders on water and land issues(research, policy, implementation)
Topics	<p>Natural resource(NRM)(institutional/ social, technical, environmental, financial, policy, land and water management, organizational, property right)</p> <p>Rain water harvesting and management(Urban and Rural)</p> <p>Multiple use of water systems(productive use, domestic use, sanitation, economic use, water quality, technology)</p> <p>Information communication technology (ICT)</p> <p>Learning and knowledge management and support alliance</p> <p>Gender mainstreaming</p> <p>Capacity building(advocacy, information, linking and learning,)</p>
Outputs & outcomes	<p>Capture and implemented best practices</p> <p>Research gaps identified</p> <p>Improved service delivery</p> <p>Access to information for policy and practices</p> <p>Information communication and learning system improved</p>
Activities & approach	<p>Identify documented best practices and approach</p> <p>Alliance building and linkage for dialogue forum</p> <p>Identify best practices</p>
Linkages/ Support	<p>Govermental: FLoWS, SLM, PSNP, Universities and research institutions, EPA, MERET</p> <p>Non-Government: CCRDA/WSF, LPA, MWA, NBI, Wateraid, SLUF, FfE, UNDP, RIPPLE, USAID,</p>
Funding	New proposal development and presentation
People	MOA, MOWE

5.4 Policy influence group

Vision/goal	To create a sustainable community of practice whereby practitioners, policy makers and professionals communicate, share and influence action for sustainable use of land, water and ecosystems.
Topics	Includes education, focus on capacity building and communication. Should be demand driven based on integrated partnership. Common agreed concepts, some element of demonstration- building evidence base. Discovering policy and implementation gaps
Outputs & outcomes	Policy briefs eg. Policy gaps Promote showcase projects/sites Documentation of best practice into user manual Creation of novel partnerships More integrated policy, research and practice Livelihood impact Institutional efficiency Creating center of excellence for water
Activities & approach	Creation of appropriate discussion forum(s) Assist universities to identify strengths and weaknesses in their curricula relating to land and water Identify champions in the different sector to develop network and partnerships Policy review and assessment Curriculum review
Linkages/ Support	NBDC local implementation sites RiPPLE , CRS, Ground level NGO's and forums Universities and research Institutes Other networks eg. IMAWESA SLM, ATA, REDD and FC co-ordination Policy makers and donors, DAG
Funding	ADB, DfID, CIDA, all donor embassies, private sector (Coca-Cola, Ambo, Heineken, Nestle), other foundations
People	Tesfaye (EIWR-Addis Ababa University), Tilahun (IWMI/ILRI), Adane (Water Action), Simon (IWMI), this workshop and Cocktail invitees

5.4 Resilient ecosystems

Vision/goal	Platform activities contributing to Climate Resilient Green Economy (GTP) of Ethiopia
Topics	Soil and water conservation biodiversity conservation Afforestation and reforestation climate change (early warning system, adaptation and mitigation measures) Integrated watershed management.
Outputs & outcomes	Increased farm /rangeland productivity improved resilience capability water availability improved, Enhanced food security, biodiversity and ecosystems functions.
Activities & approach	Fodder reserve, selected bush clearing, sustainable water points development, feed conservation, area enclosures, development of biological and physical measures, small scale irrigation Provide information Increase awareness in communities Work with communities to demonstrate- water points and feed conservation
Linkages/ Support	SLM Platform, PSNP donors, RED&FS GOV-Donors Joint Forum, Agricultural Growth Program, Food Security platform, ECNCC, ECF, HoAEN, MOA, EPA, EMA, MoWE, INGOs, LINGOs, Multilateral and Bilateral Organizations, UNEP initiative on national action plan for adaptation (NAPA)
Funding	Private, Public, Climate change and donors (e.g. DFID)
People	Practitioners, researchers, lecturers, policy makers, planners

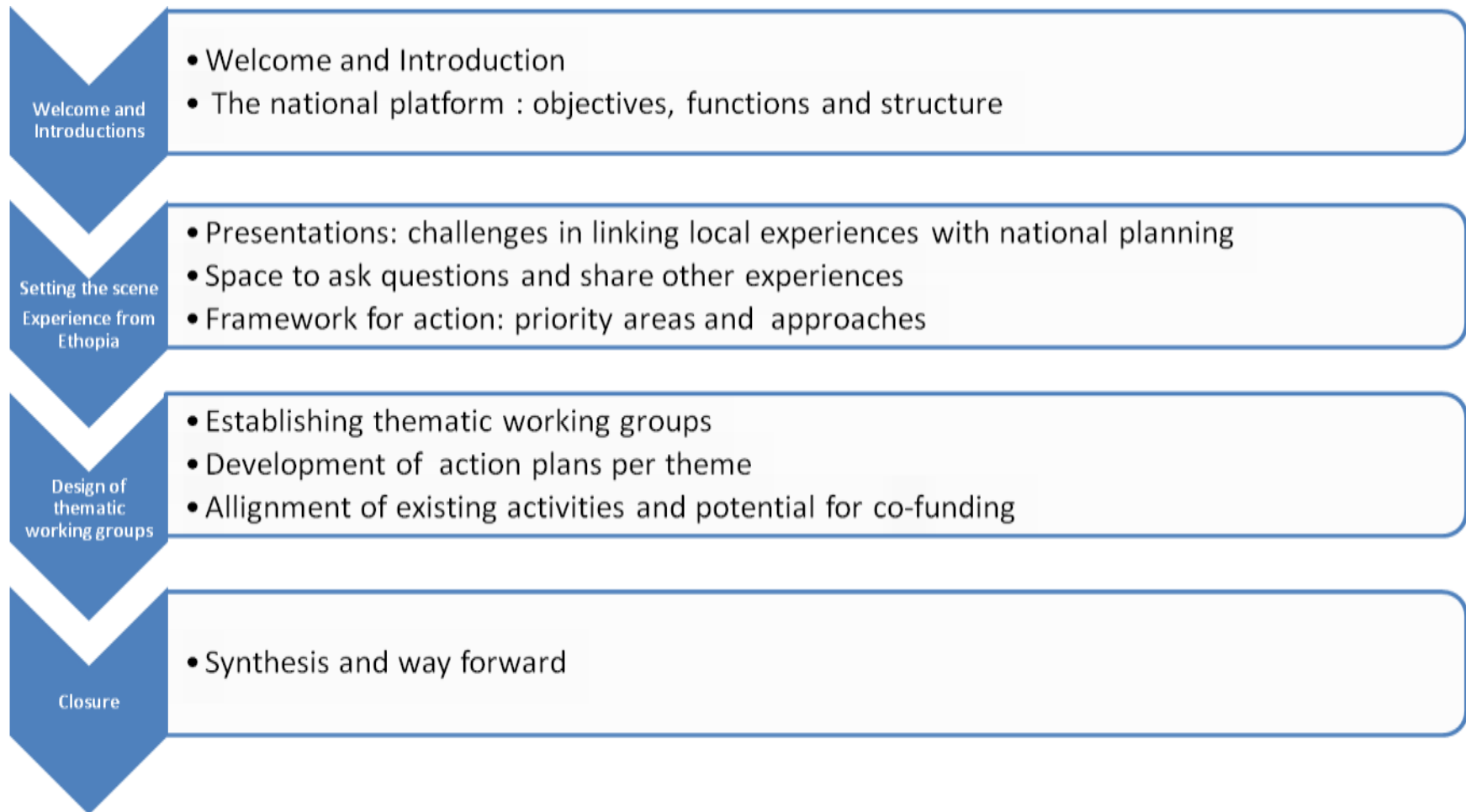
6. Way forward and conclusion

Dr. Tilahun Amede, leader of the Nile BDC, discussed the way forward in plenary. The following action-items were raised:

- Co-funding. There is a need to convince donors about ideas and initiatives of the platform. Concrete steps to take are to consolidate these ideas and convert them into something sellable. It takes time, but NBDC can develop a generic proposal and ask working group leaders to submit their ideas and feedback, and then share it with members of the platform to submit to donors. Some informal discussions have started but opportunities need to be explored further to find donor support for those opportunities. It is important to realize that some members of the platform have ‘the donors’ ears’.
- Institutionalize. The discussions that take place in the platform should go beyond individuals. Each member has to link this discussion with his/her institution; hence participants are asked when they go back to their institutions to give feedback about what’s been discussed.
- Team building. It is important that the working groups build a team around their specific theme. Champions are asked to come back with people with similar ideas etc. and to provide feedback on who they like to build their working group/agenda/proposals with.
- Strengthening communication. With the ILRI communication team it should be possible to do a better job in terms of communication and create linkages to ensure that we complement each other, e.g. on the NBDC website. Other suggestions made were to use emails to exchange information and develop thematic work online, put the info together, inform all about how it is working, and possibly extend NBDC Yammer network to the platform.
- Thematic working groups. Working groups are expected to develop their own action plans, but at the same time, they need to be in line with each other. Therefore guidelines will be developed and shared with the champions in each group. The exact format for sharing will be communicated in January 2012.
- Assess progress and performance. It will be important to think about an M&E system to keep track of changes among members and the platform. This will be followed up by the NBDC.

Finally, the workshop was closed by Dr. Betru Nedessa, vice-chair of the steering group of the National Platform.

Annex 1: Agenda 2nd National Platform meeting



Annex 2: List of participants

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